



COMMUNITY ACTION ADVISORY BOARD POTENTIAL BOARD MEMBER INFORMATION

Dear Potential Board Member,

We are excited that you are interested in joining Coconino County's Community Action Agency Board. The information in this packet will provide you with information on the Community Action Agency Board, and the responsibilities of the Advisory Board. We've included:

- Description of Board Member Responsibilities
- Who makes up the Community Action Advisory Board?
- History and background information on Community Action
- Board member application
- Board of Supervisors district map

If after reviewing this information you would like to be considered a potential applicant for the Advisory Board, please fill out the Membership Application at the end of the packet and return as described below. Please mail or e-mail the completed application to: Coconino County Community Services Department, Attn: Norma Gallegos, 2625 North King Street, Flagstaff, Arizona 86004, or ngallegos@coconino.az.gov



BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Coconino County Department of Community Services (CCCSD) has primary responsibility for administering grant awards from the local, state, and federal levels, developing and implementing human service programs for residents of Coconino County. Many of the programs operated by CCCSD are managed with the assistance of the Community Action Agency Advisory Board.

The role and purpose of the Community Action Agency Advisory Board (CAAB) are defined by the by-laws of the organization. The by-laws governing the purpose are as follows:

The purpose of said organization is to focus on the low-income population as follows:

1. To gather, compile and coordinate data regarding community assets and social services; identify areas of unmet needs and service gaps, duplication and overlaps, and strengths; and ensure adequate representation of the county community.
2. To receive recommendations, review and evaluate antipoverty plans, projects and programs, and to make more effective use of other programs related to the needs of low-income individuals.
3. To provide individuals with low incomes the opportunity to have direct input into the planning and operations of Coconino County Community Services programs that alleviates the causes and conditions of poverty.
4. To obtain emergency assistance through loans or grants to meet immediate and urgent individual and family needs, including the need for health services, nutritious food, housing, utilities and employment related assistance.
5. To provide, on an emergency basis, for the provision of supplies and services, nutritious food, and related services, as may be necessary, to counteract conditions of starvation and malnutrition among the low-income.
6. To coordinate and establish linkages between governmental and other social services programs to assure the effective delivery of such services to low-income individuals.
7. To encourage the use of entities in the private sector of the community in efforts to end poverty in the community.
8. To obtain and maintain adequate housing and a suitable living environment.
9. To confer and cooperate with all federal, state, county, city, and non-governmental organizations in achieving these objectives.

WHO MAKES UP THE COMMUNITY ACTION BOARD

The Community Action Agency Board consists of a fifteen (15) member tripartite board, which is represented of one third (1/3) Public Representation (elected/appointed officials), one third (1/3 low-income representation, and one third (1/3) private representation from the community. The structure of the Board is outlined in the Community Services Block Grant legislation, which is a requirement for designated Community Action Agencies.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Services Block Grant Act:

The Community Action Advisory Board (CAB) is a tripartite Board including elected/appointed officials as described: Section 675©(3) is amended to require each State to certify as a part of its annual application that: (A) in the case of the Community Action Agency (CAA) or nonprofit private organization, each Board will be selected by the CAA or nonprofit private organization; (B) in the case of public organization receiving funds, such organization either establish (1) a Board, which at least one-third of the members or persons chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that they are representatives of the poor in the area served; or (2) another mechanism specified by the State to assure low-income citizen participation in the planning, administration and evaluation of projects for, which such organization has been funded.

Background

From the earliest settlers, the spirit of helping other has been a key element of American Society. As communities sprang up and populations grew, the church became an important social institution and helpmate to those less fortunate.

The industrial revolution in the mid-1800's witnessed the development of the settlement house. One of the early examples of a physical facility, other than a church, that served as a center of activity for community problem-solving.

In the early 1900's, schools began to offer formal training in the principals and methods of social work, which led to the birth of a new profession. The Great Depression of the 1930's overwhelmed the nation's communities, leaving churches and voluntary social welfare programs unable to cope with the magnitude of the existing social problems.

The federal government stepped in to provide additional retirement income through a new Social Security Program and to assist those temporarily unemployed with the Unemployment Insurance System. It created new banking and labor laws to strengthen the economy. A program to provide "temporary public assistance" to widows and children of men killed in industrial accidents also was created. Social workers were hired to determine eligibility, advise recipients about how to use the money, and help to obtain services necessary to get them off welfare.

From the 1930's to the late 1950's, state and local governments had much of the responsibility for administering the programs created during the Depression.

As the communications media expanded their scope across the United States. The American public became more aware of the problems of the aged, the effects of segregation, poor education of health problems caused by malnutrition and hunger, the need to educate people so they might work, and the growing difficulties of the low income population.

The American public soon believed that everyone could live "the good life" and that society as a whole had responsibility for helping people overcome barriers that prevented them from sharing in the benefits of American Society.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1954 in *Brown vs. Board of Education* declared that separate schools for blacks and whites in Topeka, Kansas did not provide an equal education: i.e. that “separate was not equal.” This landmark decision led to an expansion of federal policy making into what had previously been a local arena. That decision served as a catalyst in the area of publicly financed activity such as restaurants and hotels. Citizens began to organize to guarantee their rights and the Civil Rights Movement expanded rapidly.

In 1961 President John F. Kennedy’s “New Frontier” included support for programs to prevent juvenile delinquency with the focal point the President’s Council on Juvenile Delinquency chaired by U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy. In New York City, The President’s Council funded Mobilization for Youth (MYF) with the Ford Foundation and the City of New York. MYF organized and coordinated neighborhood councils composed of local officials, service providers and neighbors to develop plans to correct conditions, which led to juvenile delinquency. It also enlisted the aid of school board and city council members to implement those plans.

It was called COMMUNITY ACTION, and it looked like an effective and inexpensive way to solve problems.

The Ford Foundation was funding other projects, including one in New Haven, Connecticut, which recruited people from all sectors of the community to come together to plan and implement programs to help low-income people. MFY and New Haven are often cited as the “models” for a community action agency.

Creation: 1964

After the assassination of President Kennedy in November 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson expanded the policy ideas initiated in the Kennedy Administration. In his message to congress on January 8, 1964 President Johnson stated:

Let us carry forward the pains and programs of John F. Kennedy, not because of our sorrow and sympathy, but because they are right. This Administration today, here and now declares an Unconditional War on Poverty in America. Our joint federal-local effort must pursue poverty, pursue it wherever it exists. In city slums, in small towns, in sharecroppers shacks, or in migrant workers camps, on Indian Reservations, among whites as well as Negro, among the young as well as the aged, in the boom towns and in the depressed areas.

The “War on Poverty” was born. In February, R. Sergeant Shriver was asked to head a task force to draft legislation. In August, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (EOA) was passed. Creating a federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) placed in the President’s Executive Office. “Sarge” Shriver was named Director, serving until 1969.

Congress also passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, guaranteeing equal opportunity for all. The Economic Opportunity Act, designed to implement the guarantee in the economic sector, stated in part: “It is therefore the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this nation by opening, to everyone, the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity.”

The EOA included new education, employment and training, and work experience programs such as: Job Corps, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and Volunteers in Services to America (VISTA) and the “Domestic Peace Corps”. Congress bypassed the state and local governments and provided for direct funding of community groups: the “community action” concept.

Formative Years: 1964 – 1967

The Federal OEO was to lead the efforts of the War of Poverty and coordinate related programs of all other federal agencies. So-called Community Action Agencies (CAAs) were created at the local level to fight the War on Poverty “at home”.

The EOA also provided for the creation of economic opportunity offices at the state level in order to involve governors in the War on Poverty. While governors were not authorized to give prior approval on OEO grants, they did retain the right to veto any of these they thought inappropriate. Many, especially those in the South, exercised this right, only to be checked by another EOA provision for veto override by the OEO Director. Indeed. Shriver overrode virtually all vetoes.

CAAs varied from grass-roots. Community-controlled groups were those with experienced board members and a highly visible professional staff. Most were incorporated as private nonprofit organizations. A few were city agencies.

Funds were provided through the OEO. The local CAAs determined the use of the funds to meet the problems of the poor as they defined them. These were called “local initiative funds” and were used for a variety of purposes.

One provision of the EOA called for the poor to have “maximum feasible participation” in identifying problems and in developing solutions across the nation. CAAs opened neighborhood centers in storefronts, housing projects, and other buildings in low-income areas to identify people who needed help and to determine eligibility.

A new group of community leaders developed out of these neighborhood organizations, voicing the concerns of the poor and insisting on change. The philosophy, the strength, and the personal commitments of community action were formed during this period. It was also during this phase that OEO hired 3,000 new federal employees to manage and monitor all the new programs. Most of these people came from CAAs, civil right groups, churches, labor unions, and other activist organizations.

A new group of community action program grew rapidly and poured large amount of federal funds into communities, leaving some local elected officials concerned over the control of CAAs Boards. Unhappy with the new power blocks outside their own political organizations, a few big-city mayors communicated their concerns to Congress and President Johnson. As a result, Congress began to earmark new funds into congressionally defined National Emphasis Programs that reduced the ability of the CAAs to use the funds for other purposes. The President’s enthusiasm began to decline.

Restructuring Phase: 1967 – 1968

In late 1967 Congress passed the Green Amendment, which required that a CM must be designated as the official CM for that area by local elected officials in order to operate in that community. After designation, the OEO could then recognize the CM and provide funds. After months of negotiations, over 95 percent of the existing CAAs were designated. In several large cities the CM was taken over by the mayor and turned into a public agency.

Congress also passed the Quie Amendment, which required that the CM Boards of Directors be composed of one-third elected officials appointed by them, at least one-third low-income representative selected by a democratic process, and the balance from the private sector.

By 1968 there were 1,600 CAAs covering 2,300 of the nation's 3,300 counties. OEO also required many small single-county CAAs to join together into multi-county units. By 1969 about 1,000 CAAs had been designated under the Green Amendment and recognized by OEO reorganized to meet the Quie Amendment criteria and consolidated in accordance with OEO policy. Almost all of these CAAs are in existence today and operate the programs.

These amendments had a positive effect on most CM Boards though the issue of increasing the influence of local elected officials on the Board of Directors was a significant issue to the leaders of poverty groups, which had been operating independently. The formal connection of the political, economic, and community power structures proved to be a tremendous strength. In many places the CAAs Board became the area for local officials, the business sector, and the poor to reach agreement on the policies, self-help activities and programs to help the poor in their community.

Transition Years: 1969 – 1974

By 1969 many successful self-help programs had been initiated by OEO and the community action agencies, including Head Start, family planning, community health centers, legal services, VISTA foster grandparents, economic development, neighborhood centers, summer youth programs, adult basic education, senior centers, congregate meal preparation, and others. Picking up on the concept of using OEO and CAAs as “innovators and the testing ground” for new programs and spinning off successful programs to be administered by other federal agencies. President Richard Nixon's administration saw the transfer of several large programs from the OEO to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, and the Department of Labor. Along with the program went administrative oversight responsibility for a substantial part of CM funding.

At the start of his second term in 1973, Nixon did not request any funds for OEO's Community Action Program Division. Congress nevertheless provided funds. Nixon appointed Howard Phillips as Director of OEO and told him to dismantle and close the agency, and not send the money congress provided.

After a series of lawsuits the Federal District Court in Washington, D.C. ruled that the President could not refuse to spend funds that had been appropriated by Congress. Phillips resigned without having been confirmed by the Senate.

Program Management Years 1974 – 1981

From 1974 to 1981 CSA continued to fund CAAs. CAAs continued to help communities and neighborhoods to initiate self-help projects such as gardening, solar greenhouses, and housing rehabilitation. They additionally helped create and support federally funded senior centers and congregate meal sites. Home weatherization and energy crisis programs were initiated in the 1970's.

In the late 1970's under prodding from congress the Administration of President Jimmy Carter initiated a large-scale effort to strengthen the role and management system of both CSA and the CAAs. This resurgence of "local" spirit and leadership came to a quick end with passage of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act, which altered regulations for designation and recognition of Community Action Agencies.

Block Grant Years: 1981 – Present

President Ronald Regan's Administration began a strong movement to reduce substantially the federal government's support for domestic social programs. They proposed to consolidate most federally funded human needs programs into several large, general purpose block grants: to reduce the total amount of funding by 25 percent: and to delegate the responsibility for administering these block grants to the states.

The proposal was partially successful. Congress created eight new block grants consolidated over 200 federal programs reduced the core funding, and turned administrative authority over to the states. However, it did not accept the elimination of federal funding for CAAs.

In September 30, 1981 the CSA was abolished and the Economic Opportunity Act was rescinded. Approximately 1,000 CSA staff were fired. The Community Services Block Grant ensured the continued funding of the "eligible entitles" i.e. the CAAs migrant programs and certain other organizations that had been financed through local initiative funds by CSA.

Even with reduced core funding. CAAs have been able to leverage additional funds. One survey showed that with a CSBG budget over \$300,000 the average community action agency was able to leverage more than \$2.9 million a ration of \$9.50 for every dollar of core funding. Agencies also recruited an average of eight volunteers for every paid staff person.

Whatever the specific approach taken by individual states and the block grant, the number of CAAs has increased since 1981 from 2,300 to 2,700 of the nation's 3,300 counties. The number of dollars administered by CAAs has increased from about \$1.0 billion in 1981 to about \$3.5 in 1992.

Budget cuts in poverty programs continue, but CAAs still provide a "hand up, not a hand out." The philosophy of eliminating "the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty" remains the key concept that motivates CAAs today.

This paper originally was published by NACAA (now the Community Action Partnership) for the 25th Anniversary of Community Action in 1989.

COCONINO COUNTY ADOPTED SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS

